



THE HON. WARREN SNOWDON MP Minister for Defence Science and Personnel

Tuesday, 13 May 2008

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BUDGET 2008-09

DEFENCE SUPPORT TO FAMILIES

Australian Defence Force families are front and centre this financial year with the Government funding programs from child care, to health care to housing.

“The Government will continue to support employment initiatives for spouses, assistance with housing, relocation, child care, health care, the transition to civilian life at the end of a military career and a number of other support services,” Minister for Defence Science and Personnel, Warren Snowdon, said.

The roll-out of the free basic health care trial for Defence Force families will commence with families posted to certain rural and remote regions.

Defence families in Singleton, Katherine, East Sale, Cairns and Karratha/Pilbara area will be able to select the doctor or dentist of their choice and receive basic general practice consultations free of charge and receive basic dental care up to a value of \$300 per dependant per annum.

Mr Snowdon said it is time the critical importance of family support to the Australian Defence Force was better recognised.

“Spouses’ careers can be fragmented, children’s schooling becomes disjointed, and support structures such as extended families are often far away at times of family crisis.

“The Labor Government is determined to acknowledge the support provided by families by providing more support in return.”

The commitments include:

- \$452.9 million for the 2008-09 financial year in housing assistance for approximately 17,000 Defence Force members with dependants, through a combination of Service residences, rent allowance and home purchase scheme.
- Over the next four years the Government will spend \$12.2 million on a trial to provide basic medical and dental care to Defence families in rural and remote areas, starting with:
 - Singleton in New South Wales;

- Katherine in the Northern Territory;
 - East Sale in Victoria;
 - Cairns in Queensland; and
 - Karratha/Pilbara in Western Australia.
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- Defence is working with the Department of Health to combine potential services for Defence Force families at GP Super Clinics in Darwin and Townsville.
 - The Defence Child Care Program, which gives priority access to child care for Defence families, will receive \$400,000 in 2008-09.
 - The Family Support Funding Program of \$1.39 million is planned in 2008-09 to assist Defence Force community groups to undertake family support projects at the local level.
 - The Defence School Transition Aide Program will continue to provide an aide to schools with high populations of students from Australian Defence Force families, with funding for the next financial year of \$5.3 million. The Program currently includes 130 primary schools and 32 secondary schools.

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